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SERIES: Jeremiah, Part 2 (God's Certain Judgment)

TITLE: Program 14 – Mourning To Joy

THURSDAY

OPEN

“I am so unhappy. I am so grieved. I am so sad.” Is that the way you’re feeling? Do you feel like nothing again is ever going to make life right? Are you battling depression? Are you having a hard time getting out of bed? Oh Beloved, the lesson today is about turning your sorrow into joy. (See Jeremiah 31:13) It’s about not necessarily being happy, but being satisfied with life.

PART ONE

Do you remember our last lesson? It was about “again.” “Again” there can be joy. “Again” there can be the planting of vineyards. We’re in the “again.” We’re in the fact, yes, you may be mourning now, but that doesn’t have to stay. You may be in sorrow now, but there is comfort. This is what Jeremiah 31 is all about. Jeremiah 31 is about this joy, this rejoicing that comes from our redemption, from our restoration that comes from God moving in our lives. And this is what we want to look at, and it leads us right up to the most

incredible part of all the book of Jeremiah, a part that has to do with you, because it's about the new covenant. (See Jeremiah 31:31) Well let's go back to where we left off. We're in Jeremiah chapter 31 and it says in verse 3: **"The LORD appeared to him [to Israel] from afar, saying, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore I have drawn you with lovingkindness. Again I will build you and you will be rebuilt, O virgin of Israel! Again you will take up [the] tambourines, and go forth to the [dance] of merrymakers. Again you will plant vineyards on the hills of Samaria; the planters will plant and will enjoy them.'"** (Jeremiah 31:3-5) In other words, you're not just going to take that seed and put it in the ground, but you're going to see that seed grow and grow and grow. You're going to come and pick the harvest of it. You're going to eat it. You're going to enjoy it. This is what he's saying here. Now watch what he says. **"For there will be a day when watchmen on the hills of Ephraim...."** Ephraim was Samaria, the area of Samaria. **"...[Will say], 'Arise, and let us go...to Zion, to the LORD our God.'"** (Jeremiah 31:6) What he's saying is the kingdoms will no longer be divided. Those in Samaria will no longer be worshiping at Bethel and Dan and the golden calf, and making their sacrifices, but they in turn will go down to Zion. They will go down to Jerusalem because the kingdom won't be divided. It will again be one. And so he says: **"Thus says the LORD, 'Sing aloud with gladness for Jacob...shout among the chief of the nations; proclaim, give praise and say, "...LORD, save Your people, the remnant of Israel.'"**" (Jeremiah 31:7) There is a day of joy coming. There is a day when the mourning is turned to joy. **"Behold, I am bringing them from the north country...I will gather them from the remote[st] parts of the earth...."** (Jeremiah 31:8) He's talking about this time at the end of Jacob's distress. He's talking about this millennial kingdom. He's talking about the time when Jesus will be recognized as King of kings, when David will over the throne of Israel. He says, **"...Among them [will come] the blind and the lame, the woman with child and she who is in labor with child, together; a great company,**

they will return here.” (Jeremiah 31:8) They’re coming home. They’re coming back to the Promised Land. They’re making “Aliyah.” They’re going up to Jerusalem. It says: **“With weeping they will come, and [with] supplication I will lead them; I will make them walk by streams of waters, on a straight path [so that] they will not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.” (Jeremiah 31:9)** Ephraim is synonymous with Israel. And Ephraim was one of the two sons of Joseph. And when Rueben defected, when Rueben didn’t act right, God took the birthright from Rueben. (See 1 Chronicles 15:1) He gave it to Joseph, and in turn when Jacob blessed Ephraim and Manasseh he put his hand on the head of Ephraim. (See Genesis 48:13-14) He’s saying, “He’s like my firstborn. Of course I’m going to take care of him. Of course he’s going to be happy.” **“...I am a father to Israel....” (Jeremiah 31:9)** Do you need a father? If you are mourning, if you are crying, you don’t need, in a sense, a lover, you need a father. You need a protector. You need someone that’s over you, someone that’s going to care for you. You say, “You don’t know the father I had. You don’t know what he did to me. You don’t know what I’ve suffered.” I’m so sorry. I am so, so sorry. No father should ever act like that. No father should ever do that. But I want to tell you, that there is a father that is above all that, and that is our Father, who is in heaven, our Father who was just and righteous in all of His ways, our Father who cares for us. And so he says, **“Hear the word of the LORD, O nations, and declare in the coastlands [far] off, and say, ‘He who scattered Israel will gather him and keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.’” (Jeremiah 31:10)** That Shepherd is going to stand there with His staff and He is going to watch over all of Israel. Now watch. I love it. I love it. It says, **“For the LORD has ransomed Jacob....” (Jeremiah 31:11)** He’s paid the price of Jacob’s redemption. **“...And redeemed him from the hand of him who was stronger than he.” (Jeremiah 31:11)** So many times we look at a situation: “How can I fight these people? How can I, I stand up against them? I don’t have the prominence they have. I don’t have the money they have. I don’t

have the connections that they have.” Oh, but you have Father God. You have Father God. And as long as Father God is in your corner then you’re going to be all right. You say, “But I went to court and I didn’t get my child.” “I went to court and my husband, my wife ripped me off.” That’s all right—it’s not all right. God’ll deal with them. I don’t mean it that way. But I mean it’s not the end of the story. Listen to what he says: **“They will come and shout for joy [at] the height of Zion...they will be radiant over the bounty of the LORD...” (Jeremiah 31:12)** “Look at what I’ve got! Look at this grain! Look at this wheat! Look at the new wine! Look at the oil!” **“...Over the young of the flock and the herd; and their life will be like a watered garden, and they will never languish again.” (Jeremiah 31:12)** What is he saying? He’s saying this, “For all that you have been through, for all these years, since 586 B.C. all the way through you have had gentile dominion over you. You have had the nations trying to tell you what to do. You have been hated. You have been despised and everything, but know this: There is a day coming,” and it’s taking them beyond Jacob’s distress, the time of Jacob’s distress to the time when they will be at ease in the land. And this is what he says, **“...And their life will be like a watered garden...they will never languish again. Then the virgin will rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old [men] together....” (Jeremiah 31:12-13)** Can’t you just see those Jewish men? Can’t you just see them locking their arms and going in the circles and shouting and waving their hands in rejoicing in the Lord, the young and the old men together? **“...For I...,”** listen, **“...will turn their mourning into joy and [I] will comfort them and give them joy for their sorrow.” (Jeremiah 31:13)** You know, my life was so messed up because of my sin, because of my immorality and I will never forget when someone showed me the Scriptures, and that is that [He will give you beauty for ashes; beauty for ashes]. (PARAPHRASE, Isaiah 61:3, KJV) In other words, out of the ashes will come beauty, and I can tell you that’s what’s happened in my life. That’s what’s happened since I’ve come to know Jesus Christ. He’s worked on me and worked on me.

He's taken me through trials; trials and situations that I never thought I would go through. Some that are very, very sad and very, very painful. But I refuse to be defined by them because God is my Father and because of His promises, because of His Word which is "yea" and "amen." (See 2 Corinthians 1:20 KJV) And so this is what He says: **"...[I] will comfort them and give them joy for their sorrow." (Jeremiah 31:13)** Verse 14: **"I will fill the soul of the priests with abundance, and My people will be satisfied with My goodness," declares the LORD." (Jeremiah 31:14)** There is that day when the mourning is going to pass. There is that day when the sorrow will be over if, if you belong to Him. And you may not see it in this life, but I will tell you (and we're gonna see why), that no matter what comes in this life you can be satisfied. You can walk at peace in the midst of a storm, and it's all because of the new covenant, and He's about to tell us about that new covenant. (See Jeremiah 31:31) But first He says, **"...A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more." (Jeremiah 31:15)** Ramah was where the exiles went before some of them were carried off into ah, Babylon. Ramah is where Jeremiah stood and had to make a decision about where he would go after the destruction. When he's talking about Rachel weeping for the children it transfers to the New Testament when Herod goes in and slays every child two and under. And it's painful, and it's mourning and we should mourn and we should grieve. But this is what He says, **"...Restrain your voice from weeping...your [ears] from tears; for your work will be rewarded," declares the LORD." (Jeremiah 31:16)** Restrain yourself. There is joy for mourning. There is comfort for sorrow. (See Jeremiah 31:13) We'll see why in just a minute.

PART TWO

I asked you as we began this program if you're mourning, if you're battling depression, if you're just overwhelmed by sorrow. Well I want you to listen

to this next verse, this next verse in Jeremiah 31, verse 17. **“There is hope for your future....” (Jeremiah 31:17)** There is hope for your future if you belong to God. Because of the new covenant then, there is hope for your future. He is the God of all hope. And as He’s speaking to Israel these things that He is saying to Israel, Beloved, He’s saying to us also. So listen carefully. **““There is hope for your future,’ declares the LORD, ‘and your children will return to their...territory.’” (Jeremiah 31:17)** Now what’s the context? **“...A [wailing] is heard in Ramah...,”** and it’s saying, **“...Rachel...weeping for her children...,” (Jeremiah 31:15)** and her children are being taken into captivity. But what God is saying is, “There’s hope for the future. We’re gonna go and we’re gonna get those kids and we’re gonna bring them back to this land. They’re gonna be here for you.” And so then He says, **“I have surely heard Ephraim grieving, you chastised me, and I was chastised, like an untrained calf; bring me back that I may be restored....” (Jeremiah 31:18)** Now what did you see? In Jeremiah chapter 31:11 **“...the Lord has ransomed Jacob... redeemed him from the hand of he who was stronger than [him].” (Jeremiah 31:11)** He has ransomed. He has redeemed, and then now what does it say? **“...Bring me back that I may be restored, [You] for You are the LORD my God.” (Jeremiah 31:18)** “Because You are God. Because You are God, You will turn my mourning into joy, because You are God You will comfort me in my sorrow, because You are God You will bring me back. You are my God.” And I want to tell you something. Because He is God and because He is who He is, yes, He will do that. There is a future. There is a hope. He says, **“For after I turned back [after I turned back] I repented....” (Jeremiah 31:19)** I had a change of mind. It says, **“...And after I was instructed, I smote...my thigh....” (Jeremiah 31:19)** What is he saying? **“...[I was instructed and I smote my thigh]....”** “You were right, I was wrong.” It says: **“...I was ashamed and also humiliated because I bore the reproach of my youth.” (Jeremiah 31:19)** You think about young people. I mean they know it all. Sometimes I’m talking to my granddaughter

who's twelve, and sometimes I'm telling her something and she doesn't believe me. And she says, "I know; you're 75 and I'm 12. You have more experience. You know more." Youth sometimes thinks that they know it all. They sit in judgment. And he's saying, "This is what I was." And it says, "[But] **after I turned back, I repented...after I was instructed, I smote...my thigh; I was ashamed and also humiliated because I bore the reproach of my youth.**" (Jeremiah 31:19) And then He asks a question. **"Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a delightful child? Indeed, as often as I have spoken against him, I certainly still remember him; therefore My heart yearns for him; [therefore] I will...have mercy on him...."** (Jeremiah 31:20) Now remember Ephraim is synonymous with Israel. He says, "Yes, My child wasn't all they ought to be, but it's My child, and because it's My child I yearn for them. And I want you to know that if you belong to God through the new covenant, you are His child. And even though you have rebelled in your youth and even though you've thought that you have known it all, and thinking that you know it all you've turned around and you've walked your own way and you've done your own thing, and you have asserted yourself, "You're My child. You are My child. And you're gonna smite your thigh and I'm gonna deal with you. But you know what? I'm not gonna lose you. I'm gonna restore you. I'm gonna redeem you. I'm going to ransom you." He says, **"...I certainly still remember him...."** Now listen to this and take it home, **"...Therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him," declares the LORD. 'Set up for yourself roadmarks, place for yourself guideposts; direct your mind to the highway, [return by] the way by which you went...."** (Jeremiah 31:20-21) In other words, "Plan your path, you're coming home. You're coming home. I'm going to restore you." **"...Return, O virgin of Israel, return to these your cities. How long will you go here and there, O faithless daughter? For the LORD has created a new thing in the earth—a woman [has eh, eh] will encompass a man."** (Jeremiah 31:21-22) You say what does that mean? Nobody really knows. Nobody really

knows. The only thing we know is, it's good. That's all we know. And then it says, **"Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, 'Once again [when I] speak this word in the land of Judah and in its cities when I restore their fortunes....'" (Jeremiah 31:23)** Remember we saw this in Jeremiah 29. [I know the thoughts that I have for you, thoughts of good, not thoughts for calamity, to give you a future and give you hope, and I will restore you.] (PARAPHRASE Jeremiah 29:11) And He's been saying it, "I will restore, I will restore, I will restore." These are the restoration, redeemed, restored chapters. And then he says **"...The LORD bless you, O abode of righteousness, O holy hill!" (Jeremiah 31:23) "...The LORD bless you [Jerusalem, O holy hill], O abode of righteousness...."** because when you come back— **(Jeremiah 31:23)** "You may have been a little heifer in your youth, but you are going to walk in righteousness." It says: **"Judah and all [of] its cities will dwell together in it, the farmer and [those that] go about with flocks."** Now listen carefully, **"For I satisfy the weary ones and refresh everyone who languishes." (Jeremiah 31:24-25)** "Don't give up. Don't faint. Don't say, 'It's no use.' I'm going to refresh you. You're gonna feel great. I'm going to refresh you." He says, **"At this I awoke and looked, and my sleep was pleasant to me." (Jeremiah 31:26)** Do you know who's speaking? Jeremiah, who is writing these things as God instructed him in a book. And apparently in all of this it came to him in his sleep. And he said, **"...I awoke...and my sleep was pleasant...."** **(Jeremiah 31:26)** It has a good end. You're mourning; get your rest. Go to bed, and when you wake up open the Book and read Jeremiah chapter 31. Read about the joy. Read about the mourning that is turned into joy. Read about the sorrow that is comforted. (See Jeremiah 31:13) Read about the One that says, "I am a Father to you". (See Jeremiah 31:9) Read about the One that ransoms, that redeems, that restores and let Him do it. Crawl into His arms and rest in the arms of your Abba, Father. It'll be all right then.